

Meeting Minutes - Frederick County Sustainability Commission

May 15, 2013

The May 15, 2013, meeting of the Frederick County Sustainability Commission (SC) was held in the Commissioners' Conference Room on the 3rd Floor, Winchester Hall.

In attendance:

SC Members present: Margie Lance - Chair, Christian May - Vice Chair, Robert Black, Lisa Gaver, Fred Ugast, Lonnie Ropp, Charlie Dalphon, Tom Anderson, Dick Ishler, Tim Jones, Kate Heilman, Mark Lancaster

Visitors present: Senator Ron Young, Delegate Kelly Shulz, Delegate Galen Clagett, Commissioner David Gray, Rich Maranto

Call to order and welcome: Margie Lance convened the meeting. Margie Introduced new SC member Charlie Dalphon. All members and visitors present provided brief introductions.

Administrative items: A comment was made that the April minutes should have reflected that the meeting was held at Catoctin Mountain Orchard and adjourned for a tour of the orchard. Dick Ishler moved to approve the minutes as amended, with a second by Tim Jones. The SC approved the motion. Margie announced that the June meeting will be held at the Catoctin Creek Nature Center. An update on its location will be sent prior to the June meeting. Fred Ugast noted that he and Shannon Moore attended a Maryland Clean Energy Advisory Board meeting last week. Bob Black noted that the stink bugs are coming. Tom Anderson noted that the 2nd largest brood of cicadas is coming. Tom also reported for OSER that the Solarize program started at the end of April and a new website is about to open.

Legislative discussion: Lonnie Ropp introduced the elected state officials in attendance, Delegate Kelly Shulz and Senator Ron Young. Delegate Galen Clagett arrived later. Lonnie asked each to comment on their likes and dislikes about sustainability legislation.

Del Shulz is concerned about cap and trade and its effects on builders and is pleased that it is put off for a year. Nutrient management guidelines need to be developed. Kelly's committee deals with energy and is supportive of renewables. She was not supportive of the offshore wind energy bill that passed since there was no cost savings documented. She is a big fan of residential renewables and will support legislation in those areas. She also supports converting animal waste to energy, and anaerobic digestion, as animal wastes are big contributors to the Chesapeake Bay nutrient load. After 3 years of watering down the wind energy bill, she does not feel it is profitable for investors and costly to taxpayers.

Sen Young noted that his favorite bill is the one he introduced on support for zero energy houses. He also did not support the wind energy bill, which may hurt his environmental ratings. Many legislators voted for wind energy because they did not want to have green ratings drop. He supports solar and geothermal residential incentives and believes that in the next decade building codes will change to require those features in new construction. He noted that Gov. O'Malley apologized for not supporting his net zero bill this term and will support it in the future. Sen Young noted that 1 million people can be

in net zero homes for the cost of the wind mill legislation. He noted that Maryland needs to deal with the Chesapeake Bay, but the costs need to be cut drastically. Coordination among other states needs to be done, instead of Maryland taking the lead on funding.

Commissioner Gray supported the need for improved approaches to Chesapeake Bay pollution.

Sen Young noted that hydrofracking needs to be able to be used with appropriate environmental controls. The black liquor bill should be supported to remove subsidies for out of state companies. He feels the economics of the waste to energy incinerator are changing with the recycle effort removing the high heat components from the waste stream. He is opposed to recycling and other bills that propose to remove packaging from the waste stream without a systems analysis, due to the detrimental effect on recycling activities, for example removing glass bottles which provide some profitability from the recycling effort.

Lonnie then asked for a summary of any specific comments on bills.

Del Shulz noted the "Rain Tax" stormwater management bill was to correct the 2012 bill and applauded Frederick County for its token approach to implementation. She favors a 2-year moratorium on its implementation while the details are reviewed. Maryland also should not be responsible for cleaning up pollution coming into the state via Chesapeake Bay tributaries.

Sen Young noted that some organic dairy farms have virtually eliminated run-off as a good example of the direction stormwater management should be heading. He is chairing a Business Climate committee overseeing economic matters and supports a public-private partnership infrastructure bank bill, which the Department of Economic Development will report on. He also supported veterans' training, support for higher education including bio-tech graduate studies in Frederick, the black liquor legislation and the overall budget. The budget may result in a good financial picture for the state in 2014, enabling potential tax cuts. He supported the farm community with a 10-year agreement bill.

Fred Ugast asked about community solar legislation, which would allow solar investment by those in apartments and condos. Del Shulz noted that the big hold up with passing that bill was the lack of clear transfer of solar ownership shares when the property is transferred. Sen Young agreed and noted that the bill would pass if the ownership issues were made clear. He also noted that the higher education biotech center can bring students in from other areas, helping with local economic development.

Delegate Glen Clagett arrived, and apologized for being tied up in a previous meeting. He noted that economic development needs improvement. He mentioned that passing the budget was an accomplishment that included an interchange on US 15. He noted that every administration has the need for increased taxes and fees.

Mark Lancaster asked about the impact on the housing industry from the offset program that is to take effect December 31, 2013. Sen Young doesn't want the housing industry shutdown. Del Shulz noted a \$30,000 increase in costs per home is projected and the agricultural community is not geared to provide needed offset credits for sale. Further nutrient cap and trade will reduce the building industry and prevent farms from realizing gains from land investment. Lisa Gaver noted that cap and trade as nutrient trading is currently structured it doesn't encourage landowner participation from business standpoint or from being user friendly to farms.. Del Clagett noted something needs to be done. Sen Young mentioned

that no homebuilders came to him until late in the session, and it would be helpful if they stopped in. Del Clagett noted that participation by agriculture is also needed, since that is also a business.

In concluding remarks, Del Shulz was glad to participate and looks forward to making progress in the next session. Sen Young noted that he hears the most from Shannon Moore, in comparison with all other Frederick County staff, and that interaction is very helpful. He asked that everyone “let us know what’s going on.” Del Clagett asked for better participation to help keep the representatives motivated and able to tweak things when needed – leadership of both houses needs to be aware of the issues. All of the elected officials noted that they are available and that their doors are open.

Margie thanked the delegation and thanked Lonnie for pulling this together.

Public comment: Rich Maranto advised the group that Green Drinks was hosting a discussion by Nicole Robinson about the Solarize and weatherization programs and wrapping up the new website. Rich also asked for input for the solar tour, which is being pulled together in the next 3 weeks.

Lonnie got the “Green for the Day” award for bringing in note pads for everyone present that would have been discarded from her office.

Updates and comments: Charlie Dalphon gave a brief summary of some of the Frederick County Public Schools accomplishments, including the 2000+ panel solar array at Oakdale HS that supplies 16% of school power; natural gas conversions being performed at 3 Middletown schools to replace oil boilers and save \$120,000 annually in fuel costs; T-5 fluorescent lighting replacements in all gymnasiums; and 50 watt LED lighting being installed in auditoriums to replace 300 watt lights. He noted a 10.3% over all energy savings so far this school year. Charlie noted Potomac Edison is lagging behind BG&E and Pepco in energy rebates, and the state Public Service Commission has notified Potomac Edison to make changes for the better.

Lonnie Ropp commented on next year’s legislative agenda and asked for Fred’s assistance pulling together recommendations for the SC members to review and vote on. Lonnie would like the SC to approve by the end of July an agenda to be forwarded to the Commissioners in August. The SC members were supportive of that schedule.

Dick Ishler thanked Mark Lancaster for bringing up the building industry issues.

Margie Lance asked for SC members to raise their hands on availability in July and August. More SC members were planning to be gone in July, and it was agreed to not hold a July meeting this year. There will be an August meeting.

Bob Black mentioned that Congressman Van Hollen is touring farms, including his during the next few weeks.

Mark Lancaster observed that even “McMansion” large homes can be energy efficient. He had recently completed an 8000 square foot residence that has a 24 HERS score, in which 100 is the average home score. This home has among other features 2 geothermal systems, a tight envelope with 2x6 stud walls, and a 15kw solar array.

Adjourn: Margie Lance adjourned the meeting at 4:50 pm

